FALL CULTURE FOR MID-FLORIDA AND RIDGE AREA

- L. K. "Pic" Thompson

This will reach you while your plants are in their full production of bloom and in lush Summer growth. By now, plants should be beginning to harden for cold weather to come. Heavy nitrogen fertilizer should be withheld from large mature plants and a balanced formula used on smaller plants. After September 1st all feeding should be confined to 2-10-10 or 0-8-8. Nutritional spray will be very welcome to the plants, including a possible weak spray of pure nitrate of potash.

Watch plants closely for signs of disease or scale. The high humidity and regular rains give such pests a chance to gain headway. Spot applications are suggested to the affected areas rather than an overall spray. Hand painting or treatment to scale colonies should control them before they can spread.

Grasshoppers and other chewing insects are particularly bad during this time of year. A light dusting of 5% chlordane or a light spraying of lindane are both effective and can be repeated without danger to plants. Malathion is not recommended because of psooible damage. Parathion should never be used around the home because of its toxic qualities.

Watch closely for ant beds and treat them with 10% chlordane powder. Aphids and some plant diseases are

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spread by ants. They are preparing their Winter nests and control is especially effective. Before banking earth or mulch around plants for cold protection, sprinkle 10% chlordane around the plant. This will help to prevent termite damage and control other pests using the banks for breeding grounds.

Unless protected from weather, grafting of small stock is not very successful during late Summer and Fall. Excessive humidity causes cions to rot and the stock may die from becoming flooded. It will be best to get stock in good condition for early Spring grafting.

Fall and early Winter is the ideal time to set seed for Spring planting. Many varieties will seed freely only at this time when the weather is cool, but not cold.

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